The Theosophical FORUM

JULY, 1904

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ISSUED MONTHLY

VOL. 10 NO. 3

Flushing

New York

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LIFE AND TEACHINGS
OF
ABBAS EFFENDI

A Study of the Religion of the Babis or Beha'is Founded by the Persian Bab and by his Successors, Beha Ullah and Abbas Effendi

BY

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With an Introduction by

EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE

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Entered at the Post Office at Flushing, N. Y., as second-class matter, April 20, 1901.

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

VOL. 10. JULY, 1904. No. 3.

* * *

Be patient in your trials for there is but one harmony through the whole.

Observe: Calamities are forces for development, transforming agencies, bearers and carriers of new possibilities.

Observe: Death, the calamity feared most, helps but to accentuate the meaning of life.

So also may failure develop humility, and personal misfortune become the source and fount, from which compassion springs.

Be patient: Sorrow develops resignation, and that in turn submission to the law, through the contemplation of which its wisdom is revealed.

So be patient. For only because we are fettered by the limitations of personal grief, the truth and significance of our trials are unseen to our comprehension.

Be patient then; though too long and too winding may seem the path we have to traverse.

Our experience will be the richer and our strength will increase. Be serene: and accept everything that comes into your life, for each incident adds a missing fragment to your character.

So be patient, and not too proud to accept all your life has alloted to you, do not disdain to accept the small things. For there is no great or small. In nature things simply *are*. And only a fanciful sense of utility arranges them according to grades and orders.

Look forward to the future, and regard all incidents in your life as steps to the Heights. If the rays of the sun chance not to fall on some of the steps, look to the next one above, and if they be not even there fix your attention on the next and next, until you find light.

For that light will serve as a bridge spanning over the dark abysses we must cross.

Pray not to be delivered from temptations but simplify your heart, that they may not appear as such.

And above all seek the unity the whole creation so eloquently preaches, if we but stop to hear and interpret its language.

MUSIC AND THE LAW OF CORRESPONDENCE.

From what we have said, it follows that there is a necessary meaning in music; that it is really something far more than "a concord of sweet sounds," as Shakespeare calls it; that it is a most direct and meaning speech, saying things truly, simply, essentially. It is because of this essential meaning that folk-songs are so true to that undefined and elusive thing, national feeling, which nevertheless defines itself so sharply in them. They are as much subject to structural law as the lily; and if we wisely consider the lily, we shall learn much more from it than the lesson of beauty. It is subject to law, before it is subject to beauty. It rises straight from the earth, under the stress of vital power, which soars as a flame soars, and is, indeed, a kind of flame. It is held firmly in place by the myriad threads of gravitation; and only in virtue of their incessant downward pull does the lily stand upright. Then again the lily is full of architecture, as defined as that of a Gothic arch, and with not dissimilar curves; showing that these art forms, as we think of them, are really life's necessities, part of the necessity that all structural things are under, of being beautiful. The five petals, with their pure symmetry, show that law is beauty, and that beauty is law. The color, if there be color, is as strictly ordered; if there be whiteness, law is present also in its sheen.

So with music. It is in no sense, nor at any part, a matter of convention, of human agreement, or our making. It lies under law, the law of necessary beauty. There are defects in human music, but they are the defects of the copyist; of the untrained ear, the faltering hand, the uncertain spirit, which lends too much of its own bewilderment and self-will to the inspiration it receives. But music itself is essential and lasting. It is no poet's fancy that every orb like an angel sings

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim . . .

Nor is it a poet's dream that such harmony is in immortal souls. Music is indeed inherent, a part of the structure of things, one of the elements of which, and through which, the worlds are built. The ancients fabled wisely that, as Appollo sang, Ilium like a mist rose into towers; and not Ilium only but greater buildings, like this most

excellent canopy of the heavens, this proud overhanging firmament fretted with golden fire.

Our human music is but the echo and resonance of an older music, that sings itself through the hidden worlds; and all the best music goes close to that, and carries us back to that. We have heard it in the recesses of the heart, and we recognize its apparition, just as we recognize loving-kindness and tender mercy. It is true that there are fashions in music, as there are in the other arts, in painting and poetry and architecture. But it is not always true that new fashions are really so much better than old. The Great Pyramid is one of the oldest of all fashions in architecture; yet the Great Pyramid has still certain things to say, and says them with deep eloquence. We can imagine a great, deep music, world-old like the pyramids, simple as they, severe and eloquent as they, which would make many of our modern fashions look casual and tawdry. The very finest passages of modern music, like a certain chord sequence in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, or the Walhalla motive in the Ring Cycle of Wagner have something of that great simplicity, something large and deep, something Egyptian in their grandeur and majesty.

Take the comparison of architecture again. We had, after the pyramids, the simplicity of the oldest temples; a beam laid across two pillars. That is the principle of the white shrine of the Acropolis, of all the older shrines in India and China, of the great temples of mystery in Egypt. Then came the arch, the beam no longer straight, but bent into a half-circle, as in the Coliseum of Rome; and this arch, with a semi-circle curve, runs through our Christian churches until the first thousand years of the faith of Gallilee are completed. Then the arch is broken in the middle, the two ends of the semi-circle of arc are drawn closer together, and we have the pointed beauty of the Gothic arches. But this is only a new beginning. The decoration becomes more elaborate. To the original arch upholding the roof, outer arches are added, in buttresses and flying buttresses. A second range of arches is added above the first. The windows become more and more complicated. The spires are fretted into a hundred delicate forms. Finally the decoration becomes flamboyant, every spire and summit breaking out into a bun-

dle of flames carved in stiff stone, and complexity reigns supreme. Yet the pyramid, in its great simplicity, has still something to say, which the highly elaborated church fails to say, though it is eloquent, nay, garrulous of things of which the pyramid remains silent.

So in music. The most complex is not the best. There are refinements of structure and harmony that are mere psychic phantasy, with no deep structural need. Take the song-form in its simplicity; a mood, then a contrasted mood, then the same mood as at first. As simple as a set of three companion pictures, or even simpler. From this comes the true structure of the sonata; a mood, then a contrasted mood; then the first mood repeated, no longer as at first, but tinged and colored by the second. It may be that the first mood is despair, vocal and heart-rending; the second mood may be resignation, full of deep religious awe; the third is again despair, yet tempered now by resignation, and finally conquered by a deeper faith. But contrast with this ideal simplicity some of the sonatas that fill our music books, such, for instance as some of Rubinstein's. Until we firmly grasp the fact that the composer has lost himself, and is trying to cover up the fact in a snow-storm of sounds, we are fairly bewildered by the flow of sound, of harmonies flowing into discord, of discords resolved in harmony. Here is a complexness that is altogether false and futile. It is time to go back to the pure lines of the pyramid.

There is much music that is bad because it is meaningless, a mere jargon, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. It is put forth by doctors and professors of music, who yet are no musicians in the true sense, and who, by their authority, impose their tissues of bubbles on a believing world. There is much music which is bad, because, though speaking intelligible words in orderly sequence, it is merely gossiping and babbling, in no sense the worthy speech of human souls. Such is most of the "popular music" which finds its way to the cylinders of hand-organs. It says abundantly what is little worth saying; just as the evening papers say in ten special editions what is not worth saying at all. Both find their audience, and among much the same sort of minds. Yet the most frivolous of this popular music is less bad than some that passes for classical, with a

formal perfection of workmanship, and an elaborate concealment of meaninglessness which almost deceives the elect. The psychism of the head is worse than the psychism of the heart, and deceives professors of music, just as it deceives many natural philosophers, agnostics, rationalists, materialists and the like. All their creeds and productions are equally psychic; and when people condemn something as "merely intellectual," they really mean the psychism of the head, for true intellect is as divine as it is rare, and ever a revealer of divine things. This psychism of the head is the worst of all things in music, and the cause and generator of the very worst productions. Then there is the psychism of the heart, from which such an overwhelming amount of our somewhat better music comes. It begins with things altogether cheap and insignificant, with the representation of mere excitement, as in the commoner dance-music; or with feelings, trivial and cheap, like the more catchy love-songs. From these small beginnings, it runs up into the heights of tragical emotion, the dithyrambics of eloquent despair, culminating, perhaps, in the eloquent pessimism of Tschaikowsky's Pathetic Symphony, which thrills and trembles with feeling, with passionate emotion and sensibility, and yet has no faintest intuition of the divine life of man.

In truth, if we consider the matter, our eloquent modern music is very perplexed and halting on the high theme of death. Perhaps the only compositions which, as a class, are equally bad, are the wedding-marches, such as that in Lohengrin, which, nevertheless, has its admirers. But if one takes what the musicians have written of death, up to, and including Beethoven's famous Requiem, we are constrained to ask in wonder how they ventured so eloquently to express their blind ignorance. Is this Death, the great Mystery, who looks at us with kind, luminous eyes out of the darkness? Death, the great healer, bringer of rest and peace of which the sweetest sleep is but the faint prophesy and shadow? Death, the reconciler, who smoothes all creases from the brow, who calms the sorrow of the heart; who takes the tired children by the hand and draws them into the silence, to forget, to rest, to drink deep of peace, to gain new power from the deep life of the Beyond? Would that some musician could unbind the bondage from his human eyes, and look

bravely into the darkness, until he met the gaze of those dark, kindly eyes, and read the secret of death, and, reading, repeated it to our human ears, thus dispelling the terror, and reconciling us with peace. Such a one might lift one of the heaviest burdens from the shoulders of mankind; for of Death it might well be said: My yoke is easy, my burden is light; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

But instead of this eloquent healer of human woe, the mucicians convey to us grim and ghostly things which they have dreamed of death; they give us black plumes nodding lugubriously in the wind; they give us sepulchral shadows, even the falling of earth upon the coffin-lid; but little enough of the extasy that floods the soul, tingling with its new liberation, and rising exultant as a bird rises through the empyrean.

Psychical subtleties, whether of deftly interwoven melody, or of subtly compounded harmony, do not, make up for the lack of spiritual reality. If you wish for the distinction between the psychic and the spiritual, it is simple enough. The spiritual ever recognizes radiant immortality, and is full of the sheen of the eternal. The psychic doubts and yearns, agonizes and longs, at the very best, hopes and fears. The spiritual sees and knows the secret of everlastingness, the divine eternity of the soul. Why is it that musicians seem so confined to psychic things? Is it because they lose themselves in the emotional richness of the psychic world, which they reflect in gorgeous variegation throughout their music; is it because this party-colored light blinds and confuses their eyes, and dulls their ears, leading them astray through the psychic desire of sensation, so that they bury the end in the means; so that they dread to lose for awhile their conglomerate of sounds, that they may listen to the silence, from beyond which the greater music of the spirit alone comes? Is there a psychic intoxication from which musicians suffer, which hides from them the simple sanity of eternal things? Do they become so saturated with the strumming and ringing of innumerable melodies, that they can no more do without them than a tippler can do without his dram? Is fear, unconscious perhaps, in-

stinctive like the fear of children in the darkness, the real cause of their deep confusion?

The truth seems to be, that one can only penetrate into the deeps of spiritual life, by stilling for awhile all the throbbing insistance of sensation; and, even more, the sensationalism of the mind, the thirst of sensations; and it seems that very few mortals have the courage to do this, to invite the deep silence and the darkness. If there were more courageous hearts who, in a kind of vicarious atonement, dared to draw down on themselves the darkness and the silence, our poor humanity would not be so lacking in elementary knowledge of death; and, for lack of this knowledge, be harrassed and driven by the terror that goeth alike by night and at noon-tide.

Here, then, is one truth about most of our modern musicians: they restrict themselves far too much to the psychic zone, the zone of emotionalism, whether it be excitement or despair. Their very complexity shows this, and mirrors the complexity of a life which, without the deep courage to penetrate the spiritual things in the darkness, yet seeks perpetually new and unprecedented impressions; a consciousness which will ever be extending and expanding itself, feverishly fretting after the novel and unknown, yet shunning, as a child shuns a fancy-haunted room, the real home of mystery, of the new which is the everlasting. The generation which seeks sensationalism in ever new elaboration and hectic variety might well be classed, in epithet, with the older generation which sought a sign, but had no sign given but that of the prophet Jonas.

When our musicians pluck up heart, and grow a little more familiar with the darkness and with what is beyond, they will learn to drop a vast amount of their trappings and elaborations, and to return to the simple things, which are yet so eloquent. The very notes of the scale are full of mysteries, which go down into the hidden heart of things. We have musicians writing, with infinite elaboration, in this scale or that, and with some dim feeling of the significance of what they are doing, but are far yet from feeling the deeply simple language which lies in the separate notes, both singly and related to each other. Instead of going back to these simple things, and learning the deep lessons hidden in their simplicity, the musi-

cians heap Ossa on Pelion, add instrument to instrument, wood-wind to brass, and brass to strings, until, as in one modern composition, there are no less than eighty instruments employed to tell a story which is only half in earnest, and is, at best, a mere tissue of dreams.

Let us begin, therefore, after this somewhat elaborate prelude, with the notes of the scale, and the attempt made by a thoughtful person, a good many years ago, to express their real significance by comparing them with the colors of the rainbow. This is but to interpret one symbolism by another; nevertheless even this is a great advance, for it brings us at least to admit that our symbolism is capable of interpretation, that it has a significance, a defined meaning to be interpretated.

THE ONE RELIGION.

The following article forms a preface to several more, which will treat more extensively of the subject of the One Religion underlying many religious forms. If in the course of the Summer, as the articles appear a sufficient number of the readers of the Theosophical Forum express the wish to have the series in pamphlet form, I shall be happy to attend to this.

EDITOR.

I

I have long believed that the origin of all religions was Divine, and that all of them taught truth; but I have also felt so strong a preference for this or that formulation or expression of religious ideas that it seemed to me necessary to assume a name, to fight behind certain ramparts, under the banners of certain leaders, in order to be thoroughly certain of where one stood, to know precisely what one was contending for, and in order to make an adequate impression upon the world.

But it has been gradually borne in upon my mind that, while all religions are Divine in origin, all, also, have imbibed in their development more or less of a human element; and that since all, moreover, are expressed in terms of the mind, all are necessarily more or less untrue; for, as a Sage has said, everything that can be thought by the mind is false—that is, absolute truth cannot be reached by it. All religious dogmas, doctrines and formulated statements have, therefore, lost for me such conclusive significance as they may once have had.

Moreover, I have had the good fortune during the past few years to meet with several experiences which have tended powerfully to broaden my religious horizon. About a year and a half ago I visited Akka, and there met that great man who is he present leader of the Bahai faith. I witnessed his magnificent liberality—seeing God equally in every religion—himself the head of a great faith, and yet extending the hand of fellowship and approval to all others, regarding it as his mission, not to spread a new doctrine, but to unify ex-

isting doctrines, recommending his disciples to teach the truth under the name of Buddha or of Christ Jesus where the idea of a new religion, or rather a new name, might give offense, dispensing a princely charity among all the needy, without distinction, because of nationality or faith.

Then I spent a year in the Far East, and I found that the Sages of India teach the same doctrine, are animated by the same spirit—a spirit which might find expression in the very words of Abbas Effendi.

Witnessing all these things made a very deep impression upon me.

But then there was another thing. I have spoken of visible, external things. I refer now to something invisible, spiritual, and therefore, most important of all. I perceived both in Akka and India—I felt even within me the influence of—the fervent *love* for God and for all men which accompanied those teachings—which was, indeed, their basis and inseparable from them. I saw that these God-like men, such as Abbas Effendi in Akka, such as the Sages of India, were not only teachers of men, but also channels of Divine Grace, of God's Love, which flowed out through them and touched and vivified the hearts of men; that such men had the marvelous power of enkindling, by mere association and personal proximity, the hearts of those about them, lighting a flame which spread from one to another until great masses of men were changed from worldliness to Godliness, their flames all lit from a single bright and steady flame, radiating the Illumination of God; that the presence of such God-like men in a religion gives it life, makes it vital, potent, living; while if they are not there nothing remains but a shell, an empty formalism, a corpse deserted by the vital spark. This love, I came to see, is the one thing necessary in all true religion. If it is absent, religion is also absent. If it is present, all follows in its train.

Thus I came to feel as I had not done before the absolute essential unity of all religion, the immense significance and importance of the conception of religious unity, the necessity of realizing it as

a fact in life and action, if the universal charity and love, which I think we all consider a part of our ideal, is to be attained.

So I have gradually reached the position for myself, of attaching no importance at all to religious names and forms, of seeking for the truth, without partiality or prejudice, in the utterances of Sages of all times and nations, and of passing on to others that which I may find simply as truth, without advocating the recognition of any names or forms as better than, or preferable to any others.

I am mentioning these things in order that my readers may clearly understand the spirit in which I undertake what I regard as a very responsible task. The ideal which I hold before myself is to do something, be it ever so little, towards spreading the recognition of the great fact that our one and only Lord is He who is worshipped under all names and forms; and that however worship is addressed it is received and accepted by *Him*. As the Bhagavan says in the Gita:

"In whatsoever way men seek Me, in that way do I grant them grace;" and as Abbas Effendi said to me almost in the same words: "The spirit is the same everywhere. Under whatsoever name men address Him, He will respond to their call."

Thus will be extended, in some degree at least, the charity for others which is the only soil on which can flourish that love for God and men which is the essence and the motive power of all true religion.

THE CASTLE BUILDER.

There was a builder, and his building material was that stuff which dreams are made of. For he had his ideal of beauty and wrought it into all he saw and did. Wrong, evil, ugliness, sorrow, the fret and jar of human motive and the long decay of matter, these things he saw by a light he made his own, and into each he read a new and a beautiful meaning until everything shone to his sight glorified by his adopted light.

And this light was that which never was on sea or land.

Little by little he came to love it so deeply that he could not see save by its rays, so that from a lover he became a slave. He must see Life beautiful, or see it not at all. He must feel Life happily or abandon the action which brought to him a sense of discord or pain. Wrapped in a conviction of beauty, of love and joy, as in a mantle, he rebuilt the Life about him into a glorious dream.

Now it chanced that one night he awoke and heard an Angel of the Lord calling him by his mystery name. Shaken by a great joy he rose, trembling yet confident, and cried:

"Art come to call me, Mizrah, to the presence of God?"

"Come if thou art able, to the presence Divine. Yet know that the presence is not a god."

"Yea, he is God, for I have seen him in my dreams," the man answered.

Then this Angel, who had never yet wept, in the darkness let fall a tear. It trembled down through space which softly fretted it until it flashed forth into a star, and in that star, one age, a mighty soul was born, so divinely strong is an Angel's first tear for human suffering.

Then he who had shed this tear withdrew to a greater distance, as he had been commanded by the Power to do, and called again upon the man by his mystery name, saying:

"Come if thou art able. Arise and follow me."

The dreamer answered:

"I am risen, but I am unable to follow. Something holds me back."

"Thy body indeed is risen," replied the Angel; "but what of thy mind? Does it withhold thee from me?"

"Surely not," said the man. "My mind is filled with beauty and love alone. Even into wrong and sin I have dreamed loveliness of some order, and my mind is commanded always to see the happy side of Life alone."

"Dreamers must awake when the hour of fate is come," the Angel thundered back.

And he smote the air with his star staff, saying: "Awake, thou dreamer, and see!"

The man felt a penetrative light pervading his heart and his brain. A mighty spasm shook him; his mind awoke. He stood in a castle of granite, impenetrable, dark, beyond power of speech to describe, more cold than death itself, for it was living death. In no direction was a movement possible. He was builded into a tower of stone.

When he realized this, amazement first filled his mind, and then a righteous indignation, so that he called out to his God Himself, asking how such a thing could be, what this stone barrier was, and how he came to be builded into it? But it was the Angel that again answered him, seeing there was not in earth or heaven, nor in illimitable space itself, any such god at the dreamer had dreamed for himself. And the Angel, who was indeed an Angel of the Presence, spoke as he was commanded by the Power Divine.

"This castle wherein thou standest, oh man, is that which thou has builded about thyself. These granite walls, in them behold thy dreams."

"How can that be?" the wakened dreamer exclaimed. "How can it be, seeing that I have always imagined goodness and beauty alone, and have woven some beauty or happiness into the most common life?"

"It is true," answered the Angel; "but this joy and this beauty which thou hast interwoven into life were of thine own mind alone. They were not the Truth. That Truth indeed underlies everything in Life, but it is not perceived by the mind of man. *Joy there was not; as thou understandest joy. Beauty there is not; as thou seeest*

beauty. The reality is a silence; yet not as thou understandest silence. There where the reality should be sought, thou hast seen but the material life, and shrinking from its discord and its pain, thou hast cast over it the hues of thine own mind, and loving these, hast worshipped that mind alone, not the Presence before which the Lords of Life eternally bow themselves in silence. Pain, sin, and all the hideous shapes of flesh and matter and mind, are not so powerful to shut thee from the Presence as are the beloved dreams thou dreamest so beautiful, but which in truth are barriers of stone. For what hast thou sought? The One Truth? Nay, but thine own mind. The Presence? Nay; but that *thou* callest beauty. The Soul? Not so, but happiness. Behold, oh builder, the work of thy mind. It is this impenetrable fortress which shuts thee from the Eternal."

After an interval the man spoke again.

"Is there no hope for me?"

"There is hope," replied the Angel. "Because of a clean motive and many deeds of human kindness, the Law Divine has permitted to thee the great opportunity of this awakening. Thou hast seen thy dreams as in truth they are. Now is the moment of choice. Destroy this fortress of stone."

"With what instrument shall I destroy it?"

"The mind that fashioned it, that alone can abolish it, stone by stone in weary toil, as each dream, one by one, is seen for what it is and is renounced in turn. Thus, and thus only, shalt thou silence that building mind whose tireless erections shut out the Eternal. Only when it is silenced, when the building has foregone the building and when his illusive light has gone out shalt thou await the Light. It will not fail thee. Thou hast heard."

Down the silences of the starry ways died the stir of the Angel's passing. A birth tremor thrilled through the mind of the man. A great resolve trembled towards life in his heart. And then a thought flashed through his brain, a thought so brilliant it dazed him with joy, so that he shouted aloud:

"Why all this weary labour, this heart searing endeavour, when with one effort of my mind I can clothe these stony walls with life and beauty, making them to sing as the spheres? I have but to *will*,

and here is Life Triumphant; yea, here is the Presence of God."

Then the builder willed, and the stony walls seemed to fall away, and illusions more beautiful than any dreamed before, a keener joy, a higher beauty, a nobler happiness pressed close about the dreamer who dreamed on.

But the Angels saw how he added breadth after breadth to the immeasurable thickness of the barriers which hemmed him in. For no sense of sin or evil, no vision of horror has the power so to bind the dreamer, so to hold him back from the Eternal Vision, as has the enslaving and beloved sense of the beautiful born from the deeps of his own mind.

THE OUTLINE OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

VII.

Summary.

The Seven Rounds of the Planetary Chain.

We have seen how the activity of the united formative Wills of humanity passed through seven modes or phases, and thereby generated the seven worlds of our Planetary Chain; the initial Fire, Air, and Water Planets, the Earth Planet, and the final Water, Air, and Fire Planets.

After these seven phases of activity comes a period of repose; and this is followed by new periods of activity and repose.

Before detailing the phases of these new periods, certain explanations may be entered into here.

When Humanity is spoken of here, it does not necessarily mean an aggregate of human beings, as we know them, with a certain definite organism and certain definite powers; for the human race that we know is only one phase, one brief day, in the whole life of Humanity. What is meant (in the first paragraph of this paper) by the word Humanity is an aggregate of souls, still hardly separated from the One Divine Life; an aggregate of units of life, of facets of the One Infinite Life. Each of these units contains an almost infinite number of units of an inferior category, just as each sunbeam contains an almost infinite number of rays, harmoniously adjusted to each other and each in no way interfering with the perfection of the other. And as each ray of light, if traced backwards, is a golden pathway to the life and perfection of the sun, so each thrilling ray of life is a pathway to the One Infinite Life, and is, in reality, one with the One Life and an entrance to the entirety of the One Life.

Each unit of life, therefore, of whatever category, is in itself perfect and is potentially one with the One Life. The process of seven-formed activity which we are considering, and which finds its expression in the seven worlds of the Planetary Chain, is concerned not only with the perfecting of those particular units of life which, it must be remembered, are not really isolated and distinct, but are rather indivisible facets of One Divine Life, and are ultimately one with that One Divine Life.

Again, it must be remembered that when we speak of a Fire Planet, the word fire does not mean the combustion with which we are acquainted, but rather the essence of all fire, the pure potency of all colours and all forms of perception in the same phase of manifestation as colour. The initial Fire Planet is, therefore, a shadowy form of hardly developed potencies, and the other planets of the chain are also shadowy forms, the first dim manifestations of the various powers of objectivity.

As we have seen that the first phase of every potency of objectivity is that phase of its manifestation which corresponds to "Fire" or surface-perception of spaces of objectivity, it will be evident that all the planets in their first phase of activity partake of the quality of "Fire." Consequently, while the wave of united Formative Wills sweeps round the dimly formed chain of planets for the first time the quality of "Fire" or surface-perception predominates on each world of the chain; so that, as it has been agreed to call this sweeping of the Formative Wills round the chain a Planetary Round, it may be well to fix the first Round in our minds by giving it the name of initial Fire Round, to signify that the phase or quality of Fire predominates in each of the aggregates of different activities represented by the seven worlds of the Planetary Chain.

It must be remembered that, as night follows day, as winter follows summer, as death follows life, so each period of activity, whether the activity of a single world of the chain, or the activity of a Round of the seven worlds, is followed by a corresponding period of rest; and thus activity and rest alternate in every phase and manifestation of life. And as midnight follows midday, not directly, but through the gradually gathering shades of twilight, so activity passes to rest, and rest passes to activity, by gradual shades, harmoniously gliding into each other.

So that each world of the chain has its dawn, its morn, and midday, passing again to the quiet of evening; and then comes a period of night between it and the succeeding world. This night is darkness as regards manifestation, and rest as regards differentiation; it is therefore light for the unmanifested, and life for the undivided nature of the units of being.

Thus, the initial Fire Planet has its dawn, its noontide, and its

evening; then there is a period of night, before the activity of life passes to the phase of the next planet; then this, the initial Air-Planet, has its dawn, its midday, and its evening, followed by a new period of night.

Then activity passess to the phase of the initial Water Planet, which has its dawn, its midday, and its evening, merging into a period of night. So with all the worlds of the chain; and then comes a period of night for the whole chain, bringing repose after the activities of the initial Fire Round.

To this period of night follows the Second Round, in which the quality of "air," or capacity and depth, follows for each of the planets of the chain; this Round, which we may call the initial Air Round, is divided also by spaces of night; and, when it is finished, a greater period of night follows for the whole chain.

Then follows the third, the initial Water Round, which brings to each planet the quality of internal or molecular growth; divided also by its periods of rest; and having a period of rest which divides it from the fourth, the Earth Round, which gives to each planet the quality of solidness or substance, and rigidity.

To the Earth Round succeeds a period of rest, when the fifth, the Water Round, restores the fluidity of internal growth, but with the added potencies gleaned from the preceding Round.

After a period of planetary night, the sixth, or final Air Round follows, which renews the depth and expansiveness of the potencies harvested in the preceding Round; and to this, after a period of rest, succeeds the seventh, which finally crowns the work of development by adding the quality of "Fire" or divine activity to the potencies already gleaned. Thus finishes the great week of activity, divided into seven days, or Planetary Rounds; and the Humanities and hierarchies have reached the perfection they worked for, and, once more at one with each other and with the divine, they rest in the fruition of perfect peace.

This rest lasts as long as the full period of Planetary Rounds lasted; and after it the Humanities and hierarchies dawn again into manifestation, to seek the expression of new potencies, to advance one step more on the ladder of infinite perfection.

Then, when these periods are ended, they mingle, perhaps, with

the Humanities of other spheres, and thus re-united, pass on over to higher unity, drawing ever nearer and nearer to the Infinite One, which is, potentially, themselves.

As far as our limited vision can pierce, however, our period of activity closes with the seventh Round, after which all the units of our Humanity will be united in one divine inseparable brotherhood, in full possession of almost infinite life; or, to speak more truly, will realize that they have ever been thus united, though the union may have been hidden under the veils and illusions of day.

As the united Formative Will of Humanity, working together in seven modes, formed the seven worlds of the chain as a vehicle for themselves; so each minor unit forms for itself a lesser vehicle or body, passing, like the planets, through many phases of activity and rest, of life and death and renovation.

Thus, through this sevenfold and varied aggregate activity, the latent powers of unmanifested divine life become manifested; the hidden potencies become realized, and the work of perfection goes on.

At this point our general survey of the universal processes, as pictured in the *Secret Doctrine* must cease; from this point we will be concerned, not with general activities and forces, but with the special activities manifested in one Round—the fourth—and on one planet only of that Round, the fourth, or outermost.

We shall see the processes which we have sketched broadly, worked out in minute detail; while the wide, and perhaps rather indefinite forces which we have dealt with will be focussed and embodied in the incidents of our own present life. By reducing the world-processes thus to familiar details, we gain a sense of reality and vividness of perception, which will enable us to pass more easily from the mere words and figures of a metaphysical conception to the ever-present and inscrutable mysteries of the universe and its life. Thus realizing the manifold activities indicated, we shall come to learn that we are actually in the presence of divine realities that have been described, and actually in the company of the divine powers that have been indicated; and with this knowledge, we shall be able consciously to enter into our own heritage of the ineffable mystery of being.

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"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

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